

Message Text

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FM AMEMBASSY COTONOU

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INFO AMEMBASSY ACCRA

AMEMBASSY ABIDJAN

AMEMBASSY CONAKRY

AMEMBASSY KINSHASA

AMEMBASSY LAGOS

AMEMBASSY LOME

AMEMBASSY NIAMEY

AMEMBASSY OUAGADOUGOU

AMEMBASSY PARIS

C O N F I D E N T I A L COTONOU 1888

EO 11652: GDS

TAGS: PINT, DM

SUBJ: KEREKOU PROCLAIMS DAHOMEY A SOCIALIST SOCIETY GUIDED BY
MARXIST-LININIST IDEOLOGY

REF A COTONOU 1564 (NOTAL) B. CONAKRY 1580 (NOTAL)

1. SUMMARY: AT LAVISH ABOMENY CEREMONIES ON 30 NOV MARKING
SECOND ANNIVERSARY OF MILITARY REVOLUTIONARY GOVT'S PROGRAM,
PRES KEREKOU ANNOUNCED THAT DAHOMEY HAD BECOME A SOCIALIST SOCIETY
GUIDED BY MARXIST-LENINISM AS THE OFFICIAL IDEOLOGY. NO ATTEMPT
HAS BEEN MADE THUS FAR TO EXPLAIN THE CONTENTS OF MARXIST-
LENINISM. FEW MEMBERS OF THE MILITARY REGIME ARE FAMILIAR WITH
THE WRITINGS OR EVEN THE IDEAS OF THE TWO WRITERS. SENANION
BEHANZIN, GUINEA'S COMMUNIST MIN OF INFO AND IDEOLOGY, IS
PLAYING A LEADING ROLE IN WRITING KEREKOU'S SPEECHES AND MAP-
PING OUT THE MILITARY REGIME'S CURRENT RADICAL REVOLUTIONARY
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MEASURES. END SUMMARY.

2. SPEAKING NOV 30 AT THE ELABORATE AND EXPENSIVE CELEBRATIONS ON SECOND ANNIVERSARY OF HIS "DISCOURS-PROGRAMME" (ACTION PLAN), PRES KEREKOU DECLARED THAT DAHOMEY'S NEW SOCIETY WOULD BE "MARXIST-LENINIST". SOCIALISM, HE ASSERTED, WAS THE ONLY ROUTE ALONG WHICH THE COUNTRY COULD DEVELOP QUICKLY AND "WITH DIGNITY AND INDEPENDENCE" EFFECTIVE IMMEDIATELY ALL THE COUNTRY'S ACTS AND THOUGHTS WOULD BE AIMED AT BUILDING A SOCIALIST SOCIETY IN DAHOMEY, AND THE OFFICIAL IDEOLOGY WOULD BE MARXIST-LENINISM. HE RATIONALIZED THE CHOICE OF DOCTRINE CLAIMING ITS PRINCIPLES TO BE UNIVERSAL AND THEREFORE DAHOMEAN (DURING THE PREVIOUS MONTH HE HAD BEEN PROMISING AN AUTHENTIC DAHOMEAN IDEOLOGY). MARXIST-LENINISM WOULD INSPIRE THE COUNTRY TO RID ITSELF OF FOREIGN DOMINATION, EXPLOITATION, RACISM, SOCIAL INJUSTICE, ETC. THE PRINCIPLES OF "SCIENTIFIC SOCIALISM" WOULD INSURE UNITY OF THOUGHT AND THE CONSTRUCTION OF A SOUND NATIONAL ECONOMY ON A "SCIENTIFIC BASIS.

3. IN SAME SPEECH, KEREKOU ANNOUNED THAT EACH PROVINCE WOULD BE ASSIGNED A POLITICAL COMMISSAR TO SUPERVISE IMPLEMENTATION OF GOVT PROGRAMS. COMMISSARS ARE TO BE SELECTED FROM THE MEMBERSHIP OF THE RECENTLY APPOINTED POL BUREAU OF THE NATIONAL REVOLUTIONARY COUNCIL (LISTS OF APPOINTEES BEING REPORTED BY AIRGRAM).

4. ATTENDANCE AT ALL OF THE ABOMBY FUNCTIONS, EXTENDING OVER TWO DAYS WAS "DE RIGUEUR" FOR CHIEFS OF DIP MISSIONS AND THEIR WIVES. THROUGHOUT THE ORATORY, PAGEANTRY AND PUBLICITY OF THE FESTIVITIES THEY WERE SUBJECTED, AS SPECIAL FRONT-ROW GUESTS ON DISPLAY, TO HEAVY DOSES OF ANTI IMPERIALIST, ANTI SLAVERY, ANTI NEOCOLONIALIST AND ANTI CAPITALIST VERBIAGE. THEATRICAL PIECES AND DINNER DANCE MUSIC FEATURED WAISL IN THE FON LANGUAGE AGAINST THE WHITE MAN. THE EXERCISE WAS PARTICULARLY OFFENSIVE TO THE FRENCH AMB (DEAN OF THE CORPS) WHO WAS PREPARED AT ANY POINT TO LEAVE IF PUBLIC CRITICISM OF THE FRENCH BECAME TOO DIRECT AND SPECIFIC.

5. PRESS AND RADIO, WHICH ARE OFFICIALLY CONTROLLED, ARE HAMMERING AWAY ON THE NEW IDEOLOGY, WITHOUT HOWEVER SHEDDING ANY LIGHT ON ITS CONTENTS OTHER THAN TO IMPLY THAT "MARXIST-CONFIDENTIAL

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LENINISM" AND "SOCIALISM" MUST BE SYNONYMOUS.

6. THE FORMIN HAS TAKEN PAINS TO MAKE CLEAR TO US THAT HE IS NEITHER A MARXIST NOR A LENINIST, AND THAT HE HAS NOT READ THEIR WORKS. BOTH SOVIET AND PRC AMBS HAVE TOLD US THAT THE ADOPTION OF THE NEW IDEOLOGY HERE TOOK THEM BY SURPRISE.

7. COMMENT: ONE THING IS CLEAR ABOUT KEREKOU'S ABOMEY PRO-

NOUNCEMENTS AND THE RECENT RADICAL REVOLUTINARY MEAURES OF THE GOVT -- THE INFLUENCE OF SENAINON BEHANZIN, THE DAHOMEY-BORN COMMUNIST GUINEAN MIN OF INFO AND IDEOLOGY "LENT" TO KEREKOU TWO MONTHS AGO (REF B). THERE IS GENERAL AGREEMENT AMONG OUR SOURCES BOTH IN AND OUTSIDE THE GOVT THAT KEREKOU'S ACTIONS OF THE PAST FEW WEEKS MARK A TRIUMPH FOR BEHANZIN, WHO WAS MUCH IN EVIDENCE AROUND THE PRES DURING THE ABOMEY CELEBRATIONS. OUR SOURCES ATTRIBUTE TO HIME THE DOMINAT ROLE IN DRAFTING KEREKOU'S RECENT SPEECHES AND MAPPING OUT THE REGIMES NEW ROUTE. KEREKOU BEGAN MAKING REFERENCE TO MARX AND LENIN ONLY AFTER BEHANZIN'S ARRIVAL IN COUNTRY. AS LATE AS EARLY NOV HE WAS STILL ASSERTING THAT DAHOMEY COULD NOT ACCEPT THE VIEWS OF FOREIGN THEORETICIANS. HE OFTEN ATTACKED "ISMS", URGED PRAGMATIC APPROACHES AND DECLARED HIS FAITH IN PURELY AFRICAN SOLUTIONS.

8. THE EVIDENCE IN HAND SUGGEST THAT THERE WAS NO DISCUSSION OF MARXIST-LENINISM IN THE COUNCIL OF MINISTERS, THE NATIONAL REVOLUTIONARY COUNCIL OR THE POL BUREAU BEFORE KEREKOU'S ANNOUNCEMENT THAT IT HAD BEEN ADOPTED. OUR OPINION, SHARED BY OTHER FRIENDLY CHIEFS OF MISSION HERE, IS THAT KEREKOU MADE THE DECISION ON IDEOLOGY HIMSELF IN SEANCE WITH BEHANZIN AND THEN PROMULGATED IT. FEW MEMBERS OF THE MILITARY REGIME ARE FAMILIAR WITH THE IDEAS OF MARX OR LENIN, AND IT IS QUITE POSSIBLE THAT NONE OF THE OFFICERS CURRENTLY PLAYING PROMINENT ROLES IN DAHOMEAN POLITICS HAVE ACUTALLY READ ANY OF THE WRITING OF EITHER.ENGLE

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